

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI  
NORTHERN DIVISION**

JAMES COOK, )  
                  )  
Plaintiff,     )  
                  )  
v.               )                  No. 2:20-cv-00024-SRC  
                  )  
LUKENDRA LOCKHART, et al., )  
                  )  
Defendants,    )

**MEMORANDUM AND ORDER**

This matter comes before the Court on the motion of plaintiff James Cook for appointment of counsel. (Docket No. 20). In civil cases, a pro se litigant does not have a constitutional or statutory right to appointed counsel. *Ward v. Smith*, 721 F.3d 940, 942 (8<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2013). *See also Stevens v. Redwing*, 146 F.3d 538, 546 (8<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1998) (stating that “[a] pro se litigant has no statutory or constitutional right to have counsel appointed in a civil case”). Rather, a district court may appoint counsel in a civil case if the court is “convinced that an indigent plaintiff has stated a non-frivolous claim...and where the nature of the litigation is such that plaintiff as well as the court will benefit from the assistance of counsel.” *Patterson v. Kelley*, 902 F.3d 845, 850 (8<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2018). When determining whether to appoint counsel for an indigent litigant, a court considers relevant factors such as the complexity of the case, the ability of the pro se litigant to investigate the facts, the existence of conflicting testimony, and the ability of the pro se litigant to present his or her claim. *Phillips v. Jasper Cty. Jail*, 437 F.3d 791, 794 (8<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2006).

After reviewing these factors, the Court finds that the appointment of counsel is not warranted at this time. Plaintiff has demonstrated, at this point, that he can adequately present his claims to the Court and respond to filings made by other parties. Additionally, neither the factual

nor the legal issues in this case appear to be complex. The Court will entertain future motions for appointment of counsel as the case progresses, if appropriate.

Accordingly,

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that plaintiff's motion for appointment of counsel (Docket No. 20) is **DENIED** at this time.

Dated this 8<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2021.

SLR.C  
STEPHEN R. CLARK  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE